ENQUIRY

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THE TRUTH AND MR. BIDDLE

After a long period of harassment, the Post Office Department has suspended the second-class mailing rights of *The Militant*, organ of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party. This action, taken at the behest of Attorney General Biddle, has already been denounced from many quarters as a blow against civil rights in America. We want to add our protest to those already registered, for while the paper is not enjoined from publication, and can still reach its readers, the withdrawal of the second-class rights is a punitive measure calculated to throw the fear of political extinction into all critics of the government.

In its essence, however, the conflict between *The Militant* and the Post Office is one that transcends the question of civil rights, and cannot be divorced from the history of the government's struggle against the Trotskyist movement. What is at stake is the right of a revolutionary movement to political existence. That is the real meaning involved, since in no other way is it possible satisfactorily to explain why the Trotskyist organization was singled out for attack. The SWP had proven, among the teamsters, that it could gain some strength in the trade union movement; this led the administration, egged on by Dan Tobin, to seek to crush the organization entirely. The continuity of this political persecution was symbolized by the presence at the Post Office hearings of one Henry A. Schweinhaut, who was prosecuting attorney at the 1941 trial of Trotskyist and 544-CIO leaders. Whatever we may think of this Trotskyist party, or of its program, we cannot lost sight of the fact that it is in the front ranks of a struggle which is of vital importance to all radical organizations.

The attack was not in itself unexpected. But what was amazing about it was the cavalier way in which the question of the truth or falsity of what *the Militant* had to say was handled. Far from proving the contents of the paper false (which they could no do without attacking many other publications at the same time), the government's spokesmen ruled the whole matter tangential to the "real" issue of the hypothetical effect of the paper on potential army recruits. "We are not concerned here," said the Post Office attorney, "with questions of truth or falsity. *It does not make any difference if everything The Militant said is true.*" Here is the totalitarian mind at work.

Mr. Biddle, we are informed, is a liberal. Well, there was a time when liberalism and a devotion to truth were of the same movement. Not so, it seems, today. For the liberal mind has now concluded that since we must make our way in a world of practical exigencies, where *Hochpolitik* and the requirements of propaganda are decisive, truth must step aside. Is a great hoax—that if we buy more bonds there will be more tanks—being perpetrated on the nation? "Never mind, it is necessary." When democracy is identified with slogans, it is easy to forget the unity of democracy and political honesty. Without the latter, the former is a sham, for only a profound contempt for the people can so persistently rob them of the elementary tools of competent decision.

Nor has the support of *The Militant* from the liberal press been completely straightforward. It is difficult to avoid the feeling that only the small circulation of the paper saves it from Miss Kirchwey's wrath. But the right to speak the truth, whatever the consequences, is fundamental, and cannot be compromised. Truth is a matter of evidence; sedition is defined by men and by their shifting interests. Where truth and sedition clash, then those who make and administer the laws which define sedition must answer for it.

OTHER PEOPLE'S NERVE

by William Ferry

The January-February and March-April issues of *Partisan Review* have featured a discussion of the "New Failure of Nerve." It has been interesting, provocative reading, as could have been expected given such substantial contributors as Sidney Hook, John Dewey, Ernest Nagel, Ruth Benedict, and others. Yet it seems to me to have missed the mark somewhat, and in the case of Sidney Hook's polemic against the failure of the Left to have committed gross and significant errors.

The trend under criticism is identified with "a rise of ascetism, of mysticism, in a sense, of pessimism; a loss of self-confidence, of hope in this life and faith in normal human efforts . . ." It signifies a disillusionment with the method of science as a curative for human ills, and a reversion to principles of social organization and individual attitude that have usually been considered "religious"—the principles of myth, dogma, and prayer. This movement seems to have had a decided influence in academic circles, and in so far as it has been weakened by the *Partisan Review* counter-attack all is to the good. The pietistic revival among the professors is too loudly colored with Catholic prejudices and absolutes not to have reactionary political consequences. But the deviation that is witnessed in the cases of men like Eliseo Vivas and Charles W. Morris is not amenable to such simple denunciation. And it is here that the mark is missed, for Messrs Hook and Nagel seem to possess their own version of "original sin," the locus of which is the wilfull perversity of intellectuals who recalcitrantly gravitate toward non-scientific philosophies. The facile explanation, that the origin lies in the current disorganization of beliefs and institutions, contains a truth, but explains nothing. Why this turning to religion by these people, who have in the past been associated with progressive ideas and movements, at this time?

It should be recognized that, whatever the status of their special theories, these "heretics" pose problems that have more than a representative psychological significance; they demonstrate an awareness of actual deficiencies and crises. They are a tribute-in-reverse to the paucity of ideals and to the synthetic idealism which has characterized the socialist movement. Their defection highlights the neglect which scientific thought has meted out to those who insist upon a larger view, a dramatic integration, of one's character, activities, and goal. Professor Nagel's logical objections to the various propositions on religion appear, from this point of view, a tour de force. Since they presuppose criteria of validity unacceptable to any religion, their cogency depends upon prior conviction. More important, the literal interpretation that such an analysis employs cannot do justice to the *import* of such ideas; to

talk of "supernaturalism" is to attempt to state the moral and intellectual questions of the twentieth century in nineteenth century categories. There are good reasons these days for pessimism and lack of confidence in human effort, and they cannot be exorcised glibly by admonishing against a "flight from responsibility." And as far as "nerve" goes, Aldous Huxley in his thoroughgoing mysticism demonstrates greater integrity than does Ruth Benedict in her fluent Stalinized liberalism.

Professor Hook's article on the Failure of the Left is really a separate argument in itself, having little relevance to the recrudescence of religiosity and the reaction against science. (Unless he would assert that his political views are the *only* scientific ones, all others suffering from a metaphysical bias somewhere along the line; but the evidence for such an imputation of arrogance is hardly sufficient.) All left-wing groups are castigated severely; indeed so burning is Professor Hook's indignation that he extends his attacks to certain groups which no one else seems to have thought of as being leftist. It does seem a bit silly to criticize *The Nation, New Leader,* and the American Labor Party for lacking socialist militancy; he might as well charge the night with being dark. However, it is when he inveighs against the "Platonic Revolutionists" that he is most vitriolic, and it is explicit that the source of his anger is their views on World War II.

The "Platonic Revolutionists" (i. e., those with Marxian-Leninist convictions) stand indicted because their political program, which deems this war just another imperialistic conflict, is a stubbornly stupid repetition of fetishized slogans. Instead of an empirical analysis of the consequences of action, they insist upon reasoning deductively from fixed categories containing such essences as Capitalism, Socialism, Fascism, etc.—all immutable and non-overlapping. In their union of fanaticism and metaphysics, they have become in Professor Hook's eyes "Lenin's Witnesses." Now, few thinkers are as admirably equipped as Professor Hook to investigate the philosophical and political distortions occasioned by Leninist dogma; most of his past criticisms of these precepts possess knowledge and insight. But it should be evident that in this case he has allowed a general theory, guided by sentiment, to *substitute* for an analysis of the fact—a characteristic, ironically, of the Platonic fallacy. Any just and honest appraisal of the position of this group will reveal the following:

(1) In large measure, their position is based on empirical grounds—upon the actualities of the war situation. Among these are the pronounced and implicit war aims of the contestants, the strengthening of the control of social institutions by reactionary forces, the inability of the victory of either group to solve the decisive economic, political, and moral problems of which Fascism was a direct product, and others.

(2) As a basis for validating perspectives ,they have available an invaluable fund of historical experience, and this exper-

ience includes estimates of the consequences of certain types of action for the goal of socialism. This background indicates the vulnerability of ruling classes when faced with a bloody collapse of their organization of society and the revelation of the hypocrisy of their verbal ideas. It also suggests that wars fought for selfish motives receive, in time, due recognition from the peoples, and that it is political suicide for any opposition group to identify itself, even conditionally, with such an eventual object of disgust and disillusion.

(3) Inflexible dogmas need not lead to inflexible tactics. In their policy of the United Front, especially as it was applied during the Spanish Civil War, the Leninists have demonstrated great adaptability to the conditions of the fight. To present them as ideological purists in their position on this war, pursuing an abstentionist path out of sheer petulance with events, is to misrepresent them. They do have a program for positive action which, whatever sense it may possess or lack in the eyes of any single person, does fulfill the requirements for a set of meaningful proposals.

(4) Fanaticism is an evil-sounding word. If, however, it is realized that this is what its defenders deem a moral attitude of intransigeant socialist internationalism, one's reaction is not so easily channelized.

"But what," Professor Hook would ask, "does this have to do with licking Hitler?" In this near-hysterical insistence upon the pressing military danger and in the complaint, 'mere theoretical carping,' we recognize not only a common academic reaction to events, but also an ominously familiar ideological weapon. It is the exact technique of the Communist-Liberal coalition during the days of the Popular Front and collective security. One element in the situation is seized from its context as the receptacle of all political significance, and crucial political disagreements based on a broader perspective than 'licking the villain' are condemned as malicious and irresponsible criticism. The following, by Professor Hook, is an example of this method: "If Hitler wins, democratic socialism has no future. But at least [with an Allied victory] it has a chance! It is the failure to grasp this simple piece of wisdom which marks the political insanity of infantile leftism." Yet if this is wisdom in 1943, why did Professor Hook brand it as stupidity in 1939? Any real alternative in terms of international working-class solidarity was as firmly excluded then as it is presumed to be now. What is involved here is more than a programmatic difference of opinion. There is revealed more nearly a change in moral attitude ("nerve") than an understandable intellectual disagreement. When the attainment of an ideal is conceived as a product of shifting day-to-day pressures—as among the Stalinists and Social Democrats—rather than as a planned relation between an end-in-view and the conditions of action, then idealism becomes identical with opportunism. This is not only morally undesirable but also politically futile, for the consequences of Professor Hook's

program for the defeat of Hitler would be such as to vitiate his ultimate socialist goal.

His program is avowedly an acceptance from the left of the "Clemenceau thesis," i. e., urging unsparing prosecution of the war and denouncing the ineptness and ineffectiveness of the war effort as currently managed. The labor organizations should be the organizers of victory. In the very interest of a military victory over Hitler, the war must be fought in a total democratic fashion, regardless of the restrictions of capitalist property relations. It is a program of critical political support along with complete military participation.

In selecting the "Clemenceau thesis" as his key strategic insight, Professor Hook has committed a blunder; it holds water neither as an historical analogy nor as a practicable method. The "Clemenceau thesis" was the result of a struggle *within a class,* a dispute over method, not over goal. The war aims of its proponents and opponents were identical, and one of the dominant aims was the preservation of capitalist property rights. If the labor movement were to adopt Professor Hook's convictions, it would have one of two possible results, both totally contrary to original intentions: there would be open civil war, or complete capitulation on the part of labor. (Peaceful capitulation by business interests is inconceivable.) When political criticism insists upon any fundamental change in the economic system, the military effort is bound to be adversely affected. Such demands would bring to the point of crisis latent class antagonisms. It is certain that the conservatives, possessing, on the whole, more guts and wisdom than the Hook variety of socialist, will be adamant in resisting concessions, despite probable ruinous effects at the fronts (viz., Churchill's treatment of India). *They* are not committed to *any* war against Hitler, but solely to one controlled by them in their own interests. So the socialist critics will retreat in the interests of "unity," and the final scene will have Professor Hook mimicking Harold J. Laski in public bewailing and prayer—and still dreaming of an honest-to-goodness war against Hitler—while the forces of reaction consolidate their grip.

The one glaring omission in the article that gives the show away is—Japan. There is no mention of the war in the Far East, only of the battle against Hitler! This incredible state of affairs demonstrates that Platonism—or acting on the basis of hypostatized abstractions—is not solely a sectarian malady. The war in Asia clarifies brutally the activating war aims of the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands as far as the vital questions of empire and freedom are concerned. Professor Hook busies himself with an abstract war against Hitler rather than handle the less attractive reality of a completely reactionary crusade against "those yellow b———s."

It's always the other fellow's nerve.

THE PROBLEM OF MEANS: PACIFIST NOTES

by Mulford Sibley

In a previous essay,[1] I have argued that modern radicalism is decrepit, in no small degree, because it has ceased to be radical at the vital point of means. Accepting its description of the class character of contemporary society as in large measure correct, I maintained that it had failed to act in accordance with its own analysis. It had repudiated the ends of an order in which exploitation and inequality are rife without renouncing the means of that order. It had failed to discern clearly that the only way to generate a revolution is to be revolutionary—to repudiate both the intentions and the methods of the contemporary order. Those characteristic methods were, I said, war, armed rebellion and defense, verbal distortions, and the questionable tactics associated with political activity all over the world. Radicals had verged on the truth that the end must be implicit in the means, but, with few exceptions, did not see it clearly and forcefully enough to act upon it. Particularly were they loath to make a clean break with the hoary dogma that modern war and armed defense might be used to promote in some ways the interests of those who long for the classless society. Instead, putative Radicals served in the armies of the contemporary State, carried on armed revolts against it, and acted in a manner which made it difficult to distinguish them from those who make no pretense of avowing radical doctrines.

This second essay is concerned with the attempt to make more explicit the argument of the first. It examines two points: (1) the characteristics of the modern political order which compel the radical to choose between acquiescence in it or an outright adoption of pacifist principles, and (2) specific objections with regard to the application of pacifist principles in two recent European crises—the Austrian revolt of 1934 and the Spanish Civil War.

There are three possible ways by which Radicals might conceivably gain power in a "democratic" society: (1) by the "democratic" method—full participation in elections and utter repudiation of any illegalities; (2) by armed revolt; or (3) by the utilization of principles of pacifism.

The first method assumes a general acquiescence in the present order. Win the election, capture the government, adopt your legislative program, and thus inaugurate the revolutionary social order. If the possessing classes refuse to accept the new order, deal with them in the manner with which, traditionally, rebels have been treated. Suppress them by prison, army, hangman, and police. Then, when the last member of the possessing classes has been either physically or functionally liquidated, one can govern

[1] "Radicals and the Pacifist Ethic," *Enquiry*, March, 1943.

without hangman, police, army, and prisons. The egalitarian society will have arrived.

The difficulties inherent in this philosophy of revolution may be stated briefly. In it, by acquiescing in an ostensibly democratic order of things, the revolutionist gives away half his case. To assume that a social revolution can be carried out by obeying the law of the existing State, with the hope that capture of the law-making machinery will enable "revolutionists" to overthrow the order by which they rose to power, is largely without foundation. Long before political power is achieved, the "revolutionary" movement will have become corrupted; and if it should ever hold the reins of nominal political authority it will be simply as one wing of the old ruling class, not as a revolutionary government. This analysis seems to me to be sustained by the politics of Great Britain, France, and Germany since the first World War. The MacDonalds, Snowdens, and Muellers, of Socialist politics, show this very well from the viewpoint of personalities. Accept the premise of action solely within the existing order of things and that order, so far from allowing you to overthrow it, will speedily transform you into one of its agents.

This might not be true if the contemporary State were not essentially an organization for the making of war and the perpetuation of violence. But the fact which all revolutionists must face is that the area of action in which, accepting only "legal" methods, they can differ from their rulers is very narrow indeed. There was a time, perhaps, in the expansive period of capitalism, when the significant differences between the ruling class and the ruled could be developed and expressed "legally." But, as Mr. J. Middleton Murry so cogently puts it: "What we are witnessing today is the beginning of the end of democratic politics. There is no margin any more for alternative policies in this capitalist democracy of ours."[2] War, which radicals rightly point out is inherent in the nationalist-capitalist order of things, makes it possible for capitalism to sustain itself and at the same time harnesses all "legal" politicians to its chariot—whether these politicians call themselves Laborites, Socialists, Liberals, Conservatives, or Nazis. It is obvious that Radicals must so organize and plan as to cut themselves off from the present order to maintain their own integrity.

But assume for a moment that radicals do capture the State by legal methods, retaining their integrity in the process. Then imagine that they push forward their revolutionary program. They meet strenuous opposition which finally takes the form of armed revolt by the possessing classes. The revolutionary State uses the army, navy, police, and civil service to suppress the revolt. But the army, navy, police and civil service are dominated by a non-revolutionary spirit—their higher ranks are directed by individ-

[2] *The Necessity of Pacifism*, p. 35.

uals who by no stretch of the imagination could be termed Radicals. Does any one suppose, assuming they give their services for the suppression of the rebellion, that they will not exact an inordinately high price in return? Their price, in fact, is most likely to be an emasculation of those very revolutionary measures which they are ostensibly upholding. Surely this contention is sustained to no small degree by the history of Germany under the Weimar Republic: tie the ruling power to military forces and civil services dominated by persons having scant sympathy with those holding the nominal reins, and the latter will eventually have to surrender to the claims of the former.

This statement does not even touch upon a second reason for doubting that a revolutionary government's violent suppression of revolt could succeed. That reason is concerned with the effect that violence always has upon those who utilize it. Perhaps the most significant contribution of pacifist thought to the problem of revolution is to emphasize that violence tends to blind its users to their original objective. Its use is an overwhelming stimulus to that will to power which is forever, even in the most favorable circumstances, exalting power as an end rather than subordinating it as means. For Radicals to surrender to violence as means, assuming they can obtain power "legally" and then meet resistance, is to run the very probable risk that they will surrender their ends and come out with power divorced from any other end.

The same principles would seem to apply to the initiation of revolution by armed revolt. It is a romantic and unrealistic ideology that sees the working classes attempt to arm against a State which controls bombing planes, costly machine guns, and other accoutrements of war. The rebels could never hope to possess these instruments of death. Defeat would be certain. Even if some quirk of fortune should bring success, it would be a pyrrhic victory if the general argument of this essay has any measure of validity. The political history of the Soviet Union is well worth detailed study in this connection.

The cardinal problem of the Radical is, then, to discover a method which will not lie within the present legal order and which will yet eschew violence. Both these characteristics are essential if the end, social revolution, is to find its appropriate means. To act wholly within the present legal order—to confine one's methods to the scheme of "democratic" politics—is to become one with the ruling groups, to constitute one of the police arms of the war State. To turn to violence is to end either in futility or, if a specious success be attained, to change the personnel of the governing coterie while maintaining intact a class-ridden society.

The revolutionary method indicated is non-violent direct action. It can be used to create a deliberate breach in the contemporary order by its ultimate expression—civil disobedience. Yet at the same time it sharply differentiates its devotees from those who

uphold the existing framework. An immediate significant difference, apparent to all observers, is to be discerned between the guns, planes, and bloodshed used by the rulers and the implacable non-retaliatory suffering of the resisters. If any are neutral in the struggle, they will tend to be drawn to the non-violent resisters; for it is the thesis of pacifism—and one difficult to disprove—that the psychological power of non-retaliatory suffering is considerable. If the experience of India be any criterion, even the upholders of the existing order will tend to succumb in not a few instances.

It is true that the practice of non-violence requires an extensive training—a discipline as arduous (albeit of different type) as the war State forces its minions to undergo. Pacifist Radicals must adopt a mode of existence even more ascetic than many of them are forced to assume today. Their desires they must reduce to a minimum. They must be able and willing to learn and practice cooperative methods in small affairs, for there is no magic by which political power in itself will transform men reared in our contemporary social order into paragons of cooperation. It is not too easy, moreover, to develop a discipline of non-retaliation in political affairs. It is difficult to renounce the apparent short-cuts to success which present themselves on every hand—the temptations to speak in ambiguous language in order to acquire "mass" support; to support a national war when the "enemy" is quite obviously a ruthless dictatorship; to encourage and commend an armed uprising of democratic groups against military rule imposed from above.

Yet victory over the rulers of the present order depends upon resistance to just such temptations. It is not without reason that pacifist arguments quote the words of Jesus of Nazareth, "If my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." The kingdom of the Radical is emphatically *not* of this world; and for the revolutionist to use this world's characteristic weapons is inevitably to renounce the kingdom which *is* pronouncedly his own.

Already I can hear the voice of the objector: "Would you have the Vienna workers lie down when confronted with the brutal suppression of Dollfuss?" The answer is an unqualified No. The workers of Austria ought, before the slaughter of 1934, to have developed a philosophy of non-violence and a discipline for its translation into social and political practice. They could then have met the armed might of the *Heimwehr* with something more than their courageous but futile and pitiful armed resistance. This is not to say that their non-violent resistance would have been successful. But it would at least have drawn a sharp and clear distinction between the brutal tactics of the State and the essentially revolutionary methods of the workers. The distinction between the society of the Radical and that of the Reactionary ought to have been made manifest from the very beginning, in means as

well as in ends. If the workers were not prepared to resist non-violently in 1934, they should have declined to offer any resistance. For whether they resisted violently or submitted for the time being, they would in either case be acquiescing in the present order. And the latter alternative would at least have saved many lives and preserved much leadership for future revolt.

Nor is it difficult to fit the Spanish Civil War into the pacifist analysis. Attaining power on the basis of a program which was sincerely anti-militarist, the Spanish Republicans had not thought out the implications of their position. They were, like most Liberals, in a half-way stage between thorough reliance upon military power and equally far-reaching repudiation of it. The result was that, again like most Liberals and Radicals, they were unprepared to meet an attack upon their position. While renouncing violence in form and to some slight degree in action, they did not effectively suppress the Spanish military caste which, together with large land-owners, became the spearhead of the Franco revolt. When the rebellion broke out, the Republican government, possessing neither a philosophy nor a technique of non-violence, was driven to the apparently less difficult alternative—the training of a large army and, increasingly, adoption of methods first used by Franco's subsidized troops. "So that the longer the Civil War persisted," states de Ligt, "the more militarism and *etatism* began to grow, even in the most libertarian circles."[3] Evolving no effective alternative to violence, they had virtually to accept the dictatorship of their opponent as to means, and, in so doing, to succumb to him. As it happened, they were forced to surrender because of the dictator's overwhelming military and economic superiority, foreign and domestic; but had the surrender not come about in that way, it would nevertheless have occurred: the Loyalists, while retaining power, would have done so within a system of values and organization much like that of their opponents. The violence used by Largo Caballero and Juan Negrin tended to produce ends resembling those of Franco and his German and Italian collaborators; and had the Loyalists won, the Spanish State after the Civil War would not have been the social and political democracy proclaimed by del Vayo and others, but something entirely different—a State more nearly like the actual one of Franco than the ideal structure of Caballero.

As a matter of principle, then, the Radical cannot allow his opponent to dictate means. For in accepting dictation as to means he also accepts dictation of ends—and loses his radicalism in the process.

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[3] Barthelemy de Ligt, *The Conquest of Violence*, p. 196.

SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING AND MASS RULE

by Roy Curtis

In our time, the basic questions of socialist policy center about the problem of popular control. The utter failure of Russian society, proclaimed only twenty-five years ago as the splendid future of mankind, has forced upon all sincere socialists the issue of "democracy" within socialism; and this has served to unveil the real and indivisible essence of socialist society. While slogans may reveal the banner of the society of democracy in the fields of economics, politics and culture, they can hardly approach the real problem of *how to achieve* this society and *how to avert* bureaucratic degeneration.

Our conception of democracy has thus far been largely influenced by the functioning of democracy in the states of laissez faire capitalism such as England or the United States. Its essence consists mainly in the voting of the population, once every few years, to delegate extreme powers to a group of professional politicians. The weakness of this democracy, accompanied by hunger and war and leading, as on the continent, to its own annihilation in a super-statism, has—of necessity—discredited it. No solution is offered by the statement that if this form of democracy were employed in a society in which all the means of production are socially owned real democracy would be safeguarded. For this simply overlooks the fact that bourgeois democracy grew out of a society of private property. To employ its forms in a society in which private property has been expropriated can mean only one of two things: either the means of production are not collectively owned (or, due to the temporary delegation of power, are not socially controlled), or this form of democracy is non-existent.

Socialist society is the organization of society on the basis of the socially owned means of production. But social ownership is not a formal legal relationship. Its manifestation is the control by the laboring masses of the production and distribution of all goods. This control regulates simultaneously all economic, cultural and political relationships. First, it makes imperative that all workers understand the character of the social process, and secondly, it will in the long run do away with all the so-called specialists who, on the basis of mass ignorance, have been able to pervert any existing collectivism to their own personal ends. Further, it logically follows that no separate legislative and executive bodies will exist. Both will be united in the hands of the producing masses, and actually administered by them. This conception must destroy the myth of socialism in the Soviet Union where collective ownership is recognized by the constitution but has been emasculated because the control of social production and distribution has never been collective. It also redefines democracy as the collective control of

the totality of social events, not by voting for a group of "experts" but as collective rule by the masses, exercised continuously and directly, and originating from the social understanding gained through the productive life of the toiler.

It would be a dangerous mistake to think of the required understanding of the productive process as the technical knowledge of, for example, the management of a factory. It is that understanding of society's function which results from the individual's role within society. The actual occupation determines the degree of social consciousness. The artisan of the medieval town was perfectly capable of regulating all the necessary requirements of his guild and the community. There was no separation of the individual's labor from the result of his labor, the total product. His work was his life; it comprised his economic, emotional, and cultural needs. All his social relationships grew out of his occupation. And all this made for his understanding of society. Naturally, this was true only for the society in which he was an active participant, i.e., the small circle of his particular trade. No understanding of the complicated structure of the larger edifice of medieval life could result from this unified but nevertheless narrowly limited mode of work.

Industrial capitalism, with its emphasis on economic specialization, has produced what seems to be an irreconciliable contradiction between the actual state of affairs and the ideal requirements of social understanding. This is heightened by the tendency toward an industrial organization in which skilled labor disappears in extenso and only a small group of highly trained experts remains as opposed to the great mass of unskilled laborers.

Assuming, however, that this apparently unbridgeable gap may be closed by socialist activity, we may go on to ask for a more detailed picture of the ideal socialist society. Since it can be brought about only through the understanding by the masses of the process of social control, it is clear that the workers themselves, as a whole, can be the only existing force actually exercising social power. As opposed to separate courts, the workers of each production unit as a whole will regulate the legal affairs of the particular production unit. There will be no central government, regulating the fate of millions, but central planning boards in an advisory capacity made up of representatives of the various production and distribution units, leaving all final decisions to the workers. The argument that modern society is too intricate to permit decisions to be left to the masses, once more presupposes mass ignorance. When the latter is non-existent, there is no reason why the masses as a whole cannot decide their own fate.

Of course, technical specialists will still be required. Knowledge of chemical formulae, of blue-prints for machines, etc., cannot be replaced by a general understanding of the regulation of the production-distribution process. However, when knowledge of the latter is widespread, two factors are given. First, any specialist's

activity is controlled, insofar as it is related to the regulation of general production, by the masses directly; second, the social understanding will open, materially and ideologically, the experimental workshops, laboratories, and statistical offices to the masses, so that in the long run even this development may disappear. However, even if this is not the case for a long time to come, the decisive factor will be that the specialist only exercises a function within the entire process, while the masses have the decisive say in the total regulative structure. The formula will therefore be: *delegation of function, but never delegation of power.*

Past attempts have given us glimpses of the direction in which the spontaneity of the masses, aroused by social necessity, moves. The Paris Commune, a body organized as a working assembly incorporating both the legislative and executive functions simultaneously, with representation according to occupation rather than territorially; the Petrograd Soviet of 1905; all attempts at Soviets in Russia in 1917; the soldiers' councils and producers' co-ops in Austria in 1918—all have testified to this development. The failure of the latter two has proven that, in addition to a score of other mistakes which do not concern us here, they exposed themselves to bureaucratic conquest from within. And that mainly for two reasons: the social understanding was limited to a very advanced but small stratum of industrial workers who, because of their political experience and alertness, understood the requirements of the day; while the broad masses, although aroused, were completely ignorant of the necessities of the situation. Unaccustomed to the opportunity to regulate society, the masses felt incapable and bewildered —just as anyone would feel who, having seen airplanes only from the ground, is suddenly told to fly one. These two factors, for the sake of brevity called social ignorance and social inexperience, should be kept in mind for any further consideration of the problem.

Our policy will have to offset the mechanics of present day society, for the capitalist mode of production operates against the kind of mass education which is required. Socialist policy will be oriented toward the creation of institutions which will give the masses the opportunity for both social understanding and experience. These institutions—let us call them institutions for social democracy without confusing that phrase with the sad experiences of the reformist parties—will be institutions producing and distributing industrial products independently of and opposed to the capitalist process, other institutions which provide certain cultural requirements of the socialist masses, and institutions for the production and distribution of agricultural products.

We deal here with three distinct types of institutions. The co-op of industrial producer-consumer is, as Kautsky proved beyond doubt, an impossibility without working along the same lines as any other capitalist enterprise. The only difference is that the shareholders are a broader group than economically potent in-

dividuals or small holding companies. This becomes increasingly true as monopoly capitalism emphasizes the interdependence of industry. The farm co-ops, because of the general backwardness of agriculture, are much closer to the reality we desire. Such co-ops have been in existence and have functioned excellently in the Scandinavian states completely apart from, and even totally replacing, the prevalent mixture of capitalist and feudal farm production. The reason they were not more effective in educating the masses was simply the fact that their entire ideological outlook was pro-capitalist. They were not created as a weapon of class struggle, but they did represent competition for the capitalist. In this struggle, which kept to the lines of the capitalist market economy, their strength was directed against the individual capitalist competitor but not against capitalism itself. A socialist farm co-op can only develop on the basis of the actual needs of the masses, that is, in regions where capitalist farm production cannot even approach a solution to the problems of the underprivileged majority. Such an organization will have to provide, as the society in which it exists does not, the masses' most vital need: food. It would be a serious mistake to believe that farm co-ops can be formed automatically, anywhere. To form a farm co-op in the abundantly productive areas of New York State would be to create merely another competitor for numerous functioning companies. Such a co-op might or might not be financially lucrative, but it would have nothing to do with socialist policy. If, however, in the course of the war the production and distribution of consumers' goods should become disorganized to such a degree that the people must resort to handling their own food supply, such a co-op would be very feasible. But here, as in the case of the agriculturally impoverished region, the cooperative would take on an anti-capitalist character; this would be emphasized by the structure of the organization—democratic decision by producer-consumers alone, no paid officials, all decisions made by the entire co-op, etc. And the socialists, initiators and driving force of the entire plan, will have to fan this anti-capitalist fire through relentless efforts at social education and analysis of the meaning of the whole situation.

The problem of the independent industrial cooperative is doubtless the most important and the most difficult. They cannot exist in any period of comparatively stable capitalism, and this holds for laissez faire, for monopoly capitalism, and most certainly for the era of fascism as well. Thus the socialist program in this respect will be limited to a trade union policy, which must be both political and economic. The strike must be made into a weapon of class struggle to such a degree that its anti-capitalist implications are clearly understood. Union demands must be for more than better working conditions, shorter hours, and higher pay. Demands must be so formulated as to imply increasing control over production, and committees must be established which

will familiarize the leaders and the workers with the production procedures of their respective factories, thus laying the groundwork for workers' control in the future. This does not mean that each demand must be fought until the factory is handed over. It does mean that all trade union policy should carry clearly and openly the mark of an anti-capitalist policy, tending toward social understanding, production experience and some future expropriation of industry. The IWW began with this program, but it fell down because it limited itself to the economic struggle, leaving out the political significance completely.

This is not the same as fighting on two fronts. It is not a matter of having a party and going from the party into trade union work. The economic and political struggle must be indivisible, with the understanding that, for the broad masses, the action of an individual will stem from his role in society, his occupation. In a time of general capitalist collapse such as is to be expected in Europe in the near future, the European proletariat will doubtless be forced to create independently—if only for the purpose of maintaining its own physical life—industrial cooperatives of an anti-capitalist nature. A period of dual power will then develop in which both capitalist and cooperative forms of production will be possible. Any independent socialist movement will have to prepare itself and the masses for this day.

This period will be one of transition. It will be a society in which the masses will probably have to exercise repressive measures against any attempts to reinstate capitalist society. The old state apparatus will have to be smashed, and the masses must rule through these institutions, smoothly functioning on the basis of the social understanding of the producing masses. Repression, exercised solely by the mass organizations, will be undertaken only against the parasites of society, but never against the workers themselves no matter how great the divergences of opinion may be at certain periods. This transition will appear as something entirely different from the Russion revolution. While there the masses on the move were throttled by a small determined revolutionary group, able to accomplish this strangulation because of mass ignorance, here the masses themselves will be and will constantly remain on the move because their motion is inseparable from their understanding.

We have seen that, in times of great emergency, the masses spontaneously create their own organs of production, their own social relationships. But we have also seen that after a few months of full activity and participation, the interest of the masses subsided. That was partially due to the fact that no group was really prepared for this actual development, and thus not capable of orienting these organs in the direction of socialist production (social understanding.) Furthermore, the activity bogged down because all existing parties went into these institutions and tried to con-

quer a majority in them, thus creating an elite leadership and pushing the masses back into their only too easily accepted social apathy. If, however, a socialist party is made up of these organs, if it is, prior to their creation, only a loose combination of socialists working in their respective occupational units for the construction of such organs—if, in a word, the party is the result of these social-democratic organs—then no contradiction between the party and masses can or will exist.

It would be a further illusion to believe that present-day unions or co-ops can be made into socialist unions and co-ops. The former are the direct result of capitalism, necessary and essential to capitalism. We might as well try to reform the state or capitalist sosiety in general. Of course this does not mean that the main recruiting for any movement will not have to be done within the existing unions and co-ops. But this will have to occur with the understanding of engaging in a new movement and not of reforming the old reformist institutions. This policy may present the greatest difficulties, because it may appear sectarian and anti-union, arousing violent antipathy among the union workers. Here again it will depend upon the moment at which this issue is actually brought forward.

To sum up socialist policy in general: The socialist fight must be economic and political at the same time. Socialist activity stems from the direct occupation of the individual. In its first phase its goal is the education of the masses toward a social understanding through their actual occupation within the productive process. This is accomplished first by working for and finally by helping to create institutions of social democracy such as farm co-ops, cultural organizations, independent industrial-political unions. The entire outlook of these institutions is anti-capitalist, has no illusions, and knows that the final showdown will be violent. Every issue, however minor, is pervaded by this class character. The general policy is: *not for a better living but for a new life.* The party in its initial phase will consist only of loose groups working for this common policy, but in the further development will actually be created as the result of these existing institutions for social democracy.

We may point to one example in history which shows the possibility of what has been outlined above:—"Red Vienna after 1918." After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire the workers, under the pressure of economic and political necessity, were forced to take the fate of Austrian society in their own hands. Co-ops were created, cultural organizations were founded, the unions struggled powerfully against capitalist attacks, the workers had their own proletarian army for use against any reactionary aggression. But again three vital mistakes were made. First, the struggle became divided into a separate political and economic fight, although that was slightly ameliorated by the fact that one party, the Social Democratic Workers Party, led the fight. Second,

the party took over the mass activity, limiting the regulation of society to a small elite group, and dragging along one and a half million inactive voters. Third, though the dominant ideology was outspokenly anti-capitalist in all the institutions, there was, at least among the leadership, the persistent notion that capitalism could be outgrown by peaceful means through these very institutions. The latter opinion was, no doubt, due largely to the fact that all these institutions were organized within the confines of the capitalist mode of production and no attempt was ever made to conduct them along lines which would grant a general understanding of the social function to the masses.

In spite of all these mistakes, the Austrian masses never gave up their fighting spirit. There can be no question but that this fighting spirit, which according to all testimony still exists among the subjugated Austrian masses, stemmed clearly from the socialist experience the masses had gained in their pre-fascist institutions. Nor can there be any doubt that the defeat of the Austrian working class in 1934 was due to the illusions referred to above, growing out of the mistakes of the reformist leadership.

The immediate future will force socialists to face the problem of social-democracy or bureaucratic degeneration in practice. Those who continue to dream of the "seizure of power" regardless of its implied dangers miss the essence of the problem. Only by realizing that the most tremendous change in human history, from a social order based on private property to a classless society, must be an evolutionary process, extending over long periods, with defeats in store as well as revolutionary triumphs, will socialists be able to grasp the problematics of their immense task.

WHEN BIG BUSINESS ORGANIZES

by Philip Selznick

Here is a book* that will take its place on the fundamental reading and reference list of all reflective participants in social affairs. A closely-packed and scholarly study of the combination of business for the effectuation of social policy, its basic thesis is the essential continuity of business organization under liberal capitalism and fascism. Brady traces the development of the foreign homologs of our own National Association of Manufacturers, as well as the complex of syndicates, cartels, and trade associations which have welded business forces, dominated by monopoly, into an effective unity for class rule. In summarizing the parallels in

**Business as a System of Power*, by Robert A. Brady, Columbia University Press, New York, 1943.

the evolution of business controls, the author makes four points which are worth quoting here: "First, the transformations undergone by business organization in those countries which have revamped their national systems along totalitarian lines are fully consonant with, and may be considered the logical outgrowths of, previous trends in structure, policies, and controls within the busines world itself. Second, along every significant line the parallelisms in the evolution of business centralization within the several national systems, including those within countries still functioning on a liberal-capitalistic basis, are so close as to make them appear the common product of a single plan. Third, all business policies have been increasingly discussed and formulated in the face of widespread—in many respects, very highly organized and always potentially threatening—popular opposition, whose interests have been coming into conflict with those of organized business in a way which more and more challenges the traditional business view of the proper objectives and the responsibilities of economic leadership as such. And finally, the implications of power in such wide-spreading business controls, together with the popular challenge to business leaders, cause all economic issues to take on a political meaning, and thereby cause the role of the government to grow in importance in a sort of geometric ratio."

There is nothing particularly new in this analysis to socialists long accustomed to thinking of business as indeed "a system of power," but the book gains importance from its collation of the empirical material, its concrete analysis of certain special problems, and from the inevitable contribution which it must make to the clarification of our analysis of the totalitarian state.

The book is of the same school of thought as Franz Neumann's *Behemoth*. But while the thesis of the *continuity* of monopoly capitalism and fascism is amply documented, it would be easy to pass over from that to the facile conclusion that they are *identical* as economic systems. There is no evidence for that. However, Brady's and Neumann's presentations are a strong and much-needed antidote for the point of view which would draw from the *convergence* of German and Russian totalitarianism the conclusion that they are basically the same social trends. That conclusion is extremely widespread and carries with it grave dangers for the possibility of elaborating a realistic strategy for democratic social action. Thus to rip the Communist and Fascist parties out of the context of the social forces in which they are rooted is to frustrate any adequate appraisal of how to deal with these diverse representatives of an *ultimately* similar social trend. We cannot abstract Stalinism and Fascism from the concrete events which led to each, and in this sense there is a difference pregnant with significance for political strategy. The struggle against fascism in our own country remains indissolubly linked to the mobilization of the workingclass for revolutionary action against monopoly capi-

talism; the urgent necessity for politically annihilating the Communist Party is another matter entirely.

There is another sense in which such attempts as this one to trace the concrete relation between the growth of the state and private social forces is significant. The completely justifiable orientation of modern socialists against the growth of the state as such, based on the well-substantiated hypothesis of the normal continuous extension of bureaucratic interests, ought not to be transformed into a glib formula. In analyzing the intervention of government into social affairs, we must do so concretely, in terms of the actual social forces inside and outside the state which are molding the social policy of the administrative apparatus. Thus we have little to fear, on the score of statism, from the Farm Security Administration, because on the one hand it stands on the periphery of the internally powerful state organizations, and on the other because it is linked to and dependent on outside forces, such as the Farmers Union, which are organs of popular control and therefore likely to shape the administrative structure in a progressive direction. Indeed, it may be said that the history of the capitalist state (by which we mean the state receptive to and shaped by the dominant organs of the business community) has provided us with an important working principle, viz., that private organizations paralleling but independent of an administrative structure may have a decisive influence on its social policy and may effectively curtail the development of independent statist bureaucratic trends. This is managed through such mechanisms as recruitment of personnel from the private organizations, the construction of an appropriate ideology, and so shaping the situation that the state agency becomes dependent on the private organization for such essentials as the continuous flow of funds from the central government. This principle may well be one of the crucial points required for a definition of democratic socialist administration. Popular organizations, including those organized on a non-functional (consumer) basis, must be substituted for the capitalist trade associations, which means in turn that the old bureaucracy built upon the basis of the old alignments must be replaced. But the *lesson* is one of a technique for controlling governmental structures.

There is much in Brady's analysis which has wider implications than he is inclined to say. Thus in his extremely fecund discussion of the economic policies of the *Spitzenverbände,* he points out that "in the huge corporate complexes of all major capitalistic countries there are growing up inner blocs of bureaucratically self-perpetuating interests; these blocs may have next to no ownership stakes in the vast properties, which, nevertheless, they are able to manipulate, through the exigencies of special knowledge, outside contacts, inside personal or committee compacts, or other methods of acquiring strategic position." A close look at the techniques of

bureaucratic control referred to will indicate that these are *general,* and can operate in all administrative structures whether capitalist or not. The implications of bureaucratic combination are important for democratic socialists, for theoretically such combinations and blocs by the bureaucratic tops of, say, public corporations, is far from excluded. This is particularly true when the driving forces of combination are general managerial and technological "communities of interest." It is only a step from the division of administrative jurisdictions, as of the distribution of electric power, by mutual agreement, to the use of combinations and informal alignments for purposes of joint economic control. This would be true even in a socialized economy, for it may be assumed that economic control and social power will still go hand in hand. The consciousness of all these possibilities will lead to a sensitivity on the part of socialists to the development of techniques for extensive popular control. Another problem which has more general implications than Brady is willing to draw may be seen in his suggestion that the cooptation of business groupings in the fascist state is a mechanism of administrative decentralization. It would be interesting to know whether in Russia there is not a converging pattern, and whether these decentralized organs, if developed under Stalinist collectivism, would not tend to become the loci of centrifugal power groupings.

One of the best parts of the book is that in which Brady further documents the integral relation between fascism and monopoly capitalism in his discussion of the social complement of private monopoly: the structure and ideology of *status.* Analyzing speeches and other documents of business organizations in various countries, he finds a common ideological trend toward a theory of the preordained governing elite with its emphasis on the "natural leader" and its ready consonance with a caste system. This analysis is of great value in dealing with the amalgamated ruling class of the fascist state. It is well worth reading.

MORE ON TRUTH AND SCIENCE

by Jim Cork - Louis Clair

Louis Clair's defense of a theory of class and partisan truth in the Jan. '43 issue of ENQUIRY is of course nothing new in the radical movement. Impatient attempts at a short cut to a desired theoretical millenium have periodically erupted in and around the socialist movement, and as periodically been laid to rest, one hoped for good: But they do erupt again! Gertrude Jaeger has, I think, very neatly indicated the shortcomings of the theory in her answer to Mr. Clair—at least on the theory's sociological side. There would be no point in traversing this same bit of ground again. But Mr. Clair has succumbed to the blandishments of logical symmetry and furnished a supporting companion piece to his venture sociologicus in a parallel bit of

theorizing over the nature of objective laws in the natural sciences, e.g. physics, etc. And it is to this that I want to pay my own bit of respect.

Says Mr. Clair: "The contention of Marxists—*that, to a certain degree, reality, the objective world, is itself shifting together with the means by which men view it,* that there is no such thing as objective and eternal truth—has been realized by physicists themselves. Modern physics (especially Heisenberg, but also Bohr, Broglie and others) has come to the conclusion that it is impossible to state objective laws without taking into consideration the act of the observer."

Now that first sentence, especially the part I underlined, is a honey. What a variety of interpretations can be read into it!—and that is the measure of its potential confusion. For inelegant, inexact, unscientific formulation, it can hardly be beat. At the very start, for the sake of the reader, if not himself, Mr. Clair ought to make clear exactly what he does mean (and if possible, may I suggest, without recourse to Marx, Engels, the dialectic or Lenin's Empirio-criticism).

As to the second sentence, which contains the essential point of his position, Mr. Clair will pardon me if I venture to state dogmatically that modern physics has come to no such conclusion. Certain *individual* physicists have, but certain others of equal if not greater prominence and stature do not agree with such subjectivistic interpretations of recent empiric advances in modern physics (for instance, Einstein and Planck, one the discoverer of the Relativity Theory, the other of the Quantum, the two chief cornerstones in the structure of modern physics). In either case, the thoughts of physicists on the subject are their own personal views, and belong in the realm of philosophic speculation and not in the structure of physics as such.

Heisenberg looms large among the notables of physics mentioned in Mr. Clair's parenthesis, so though unstated, I take it that Mr. Clair's own speculations, as those of so many others, take as their point of departure Heisenberg's so-called theory of indeterminacy. In 1927, on the basis of his investigations in the sub-atomic world, Heisenberg announced as a leading principle that it is impossible to determine simultaneously the exact position and velocity of a moving particle. That is, the more accurately we determine the exact position in space of a particle, the less accurately can we determine its velocity at that identical moment, and vice-versa. Heisenberg's conclusion must be accepted as an empirical fact. But the far-reaching conclusions of a philosophical kind regarding the nature and structure of the universe that have been drawn therefrom represent something else entirely. A veritable wave of attacks began from all directions against materialism, mechanism, determinism, causality, and objectivism in science. Philosophic idealism got a new lease on life and in turn supported every specious variety of religious and mystical obscurantism. In addition to the names mentioned by Mr. Clair, yeoman service in this direction has been performed by such men as Schrödinger, Eddington, Jeans, Compton, Bridgman, etc. Not all of them of course did all of the above things, and I'm sure Mr. Clair would not countenance most of it; but the fact remains that his own formulation is a respectable and representative product of this post-1927 style of philosophizing about physics, and I believe, an unwarranted deduction from the empiric facts as such. For instance, a crystal clear statement of the subjectivistic position which Mr. Clair seems to support was made by Prof. Bridgman: "A body has position only insofar as its position can be measured; if its position cannot in principle be measured, the concept of position applied to the body is meaningless, or in other words a position of the body does not exist.... To carry the paradox one step further, by choosing whether I shall measure the position or velocity of the electron I thereby determine whether the electron has position or velocity. The physical properties of the electron are not absolutely inherent in it, but involve also the choice of the observer."

Now, that's a very neat job in sleight-of-hand. The central fallacy in such a position, it seems to me, lies in making susceptibility to precise measurement the criterion of objective existence, and further in interpreting an exist-

ing difficulty in measurement as signifying that the observer decides whether a moving particle has position and velocity, or both, or neither. Many investigators have stressed the fact that the difficulty in precise measurement has an objective root in matter outside the will or consciousness of the human observer, that the difficulty comes as an objective consequence of the nature of measurement of a moving electron. Planck, for instance, seems to me to make this quite clear in his discussion of the matter in his *Philosophy of Physics*. We can determine the position of an electron, he says, only if we can see it, and in order to see it we must illuminate it, i.e., we must allow light to fall upon it. The rays of light falling upon it hit the electron and change its velocity in a way which it is almost impossible to calculate. The more accurately we desire to determine the position of the electron, the shorter must be the light waves employed to illuminate it, the stronger will be the impact and the greater the inaccuracy with which the velocity is determined. So that according to Planck, the measuring instrument used (light waves) affects the thing to be measured (moving electron) in such a way as to make an exact simultaneous measurement of position and velocity impossible. It is clear, however, says Planck, that we are not dealing with a situation in which the behavior of the electron is a haphazard one. Indeed the very difficulty of tracing the course of the electron is itself an illustration of the cause and effect relationship. Planck says:

"The physical system under consideration forms a totality subject to law if the process of measuring is treated as forming a part of it." He further stresses the fact that the very errors upon which the indeterminacy theory is based themselves exhibit a deterministic base. The errors either in position or velocity are not independent of each other, but on the contrary are mutually interrelated. The smaller the error in position, the greater the error in velocity, and vice versa. The product of the errors is always the same and equal to Planck's constant "h". And Planck concludes, "The existence of an objective limit like Planck's quantum is a sure indication that a certain novel law is at work." So much for the theory of indeterminacy.

Of course Heisenberg's principle was neither the first, nor will it be the last empiric advance in modern physics from which an outworn philosophic idealism will seek to gather new sustenance. It was only one of the more recent and one of the most "promising" developments for the guardian angels of idealism who are always on the watch for such possibilities. Similar attempts were made to draw subjectivist conclusions from Einstein's theory of relativity long before Heisenberg, for relativity *seemed* to place the observer and his frame of reference in a directive and decisive position. Yet here also the central *objective* point was missed, viz., that the foundation of the relativity theory lies in the fact that in the 4-dimensional space-time manifold there is a measure which for all measuring observers and all reference systems has an absolute value entirely independent of any action, will or desire of the human observer. As Morris R. Cohen says in his *Reason and Nature:*

"Einstein's conception of the essential unity of time and space in existence and the idea that the laws of nature must be absolute or invariant in all spatio-temporal transformations is the capital point to keep in mind. This will enable us to dismiss at once the popular impression which, confusing physical relativity with the relativity of knowledge to mind or consciousness, sees in Einstein's work a new support to anti-materialist subjectivism. In none of the phenomena explained by relativity is there any special reference to mind. When we speak of the length of a body depending upon the state of the observer, we do not refer to his consciousness or subjective feeling but to the velocity of the physical system in which he might set up yardsticks and clocks to measure physical processes."

I have, I think, presented enough evidence to warrant the following three conclusions:

1. The questions involved are questions of philosophic interpretation and should not be presented as if they had already been incorporated into the structure of science itself.

2. They are still moot points amongst scientists and philosophers and should not be represented as if there were universal agreement on these matters.

3. The empiric facts to date hardly as yet seem to warrant the "overthrow" of materialism, mechanism, causality, objectivism in science.

There is much soul-searching going on in the ranks of the scientists regarding the present status of the concept of causality. A flexible and concrete extension of the causality concept seems to be in the making without the slightest invalidation, however, of an objectivistic outlook. A very fruitful discussion of the whole problem is contained in the first part of a recent pamphlet* by Ernest Nagel, one of the solidest and sanest spirits of the modern American school of scientifically minded philosophers. Would Mr. Clair mind if I suggested he read it? It might prove very salutary.

One final word. Mr. Clair would do well to eschew a narrow, mechanical monism which seeks to carry over presumed truths in the natural world to the field of sociologic analysis. Whatever the accepted facts in the natural sciences, they cast no basic or significant light on the necessary methods of approach to the problems of society and desired social change, which have a specific and concrete character of their own.

Mr. Clair Replies:

A discussion of physics is what I would have least expected to come from my letter. The layman bows before Mr. Cork's superior knowledge of physics. I do not feel any disagreement with his exposition, especially not with the passages from Planck. For some obscure reason Mr. Cork is battling windmills.

But so far as philosophy is concerned it seems to me that Mr. Cork moves on less sure ground. I am really at a loss to understand how he can accuse me at the same time of idealist-subjectivism and of following the rather amateurish kind of materialist philosophy which is expounded in Lenin's Empirio-Criticism.

My argument, perhaps inadequately expressed, was the following: Modern physics has introduced the principle of the interrelation between the object to be measured and the measuring instrument. As Mr. Cork quotes Planck: "the physical system . . . *forms a totality* subject to law if the *process of measuring* is treated as *forming a part of it.*"

This has nothing to do with the Heisenberg-Bohr subjectivistic-idealistic interpretation of the empirical findings. The contention that there is an interrelation between subject and object—and that was the core of my argument— has nothing to do with the negation of the existence of the object. On the contrary, this interrelation forms a very real and concrete dialectic. If we abandon old forms of causality, the abandonment of *this* causality certainly does not seem to be warranted. Classical physics believed in the description of an objective reality independent of the subject, the observer, the instrument; modern physics recognizes the interrelation between them. My only reason for bringing physics into the picture was precisely in order to stress this observer-object interrelation, certainly not to reintroduce, at Mr. Cork's choice, either idealism or mechanist materialism.

LOUIS CLAIR

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*"Principles of the Theory of Probability" Vol. 1 No. 6, *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, Univ. of Chicago Press.

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